



## Feinstein Urges Timely, Fair Claims Processing for Santa Susanna Field Lab Employees Harmed by Radiation and Toxic Exposure

*- Out of approximately 500 claims filed, only seven have been paid -  
January 31, 2006*

**Washington, DC** – Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) today urged the Department of Labor to look into delays in claims filed by former Santa Susana Field Laboratory employees under a 2000 program established by Congress to compensate workers at the Department of Energy's nuclear facilities.

Former employees of the Santa Susana Field Laboratory were harmed by exposure to radiation and other toxic materials while working on government contracts in the 1950s and 1960s, and despite Congress directing the Department of Labor to evaluate and expedite the claims process for these workers, most have received little or no help from the government.

In a letter to Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao, Senator Feinstein wrote, **“These workers were subject to radiation and toxic exposure in their service to the federal government. I urge you to look into this matter and ensure that valid claims are processed in a timely and fair manner.”**

Senator Feinstein expressed great concern over reports that out of approximately 500 claims filed by former Santa Susana Field Lab employees, only seven have been paid. The following is the text of the letter sent by Senator Feinstein to Secretary Chao:

January 30, 2006

The Honorable Elaine Chao  
Secretary of Labor  
U.S. Department of Labor  
Washington, D.C. 20210

Dear Secretary Chao:

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the compensation of the former employees of the Santa Susana Field Laboratory (SSFL).

Five years ago, Congress passed the Energy Employee Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act. The purpose of that legislation was to provide employees of Department of Energy (DOE) nuclear facilities and their families up to \$150,000 each, in addition to providing them with assistance in applying for workers compensation.

In 2004, in an effort to expedite the claims process, Congress provided the Department of Labor the authority to evaluate workers' claims that they were harmed by exposure to radiation and other toxic materials. Despite these efforts, delays continue. It is my understanding that out of approximately 500 claims filed by former SSFL employees, only seven have been paid.

These workers were subject to radiation and toxic exposure in their service to the federal government. I urge you to look into this matter and ensure that valid claims are processed in a timely and fair manner.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator

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